

SUMMONS ISSUED

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

FILED
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U.S. DISTRICT COURT E.D.N.Y.
★ SEP 23 2011 ★

BROOKLYN OFFICE

Racha Elfaham,

Plaintiff,

v.

Cohen & Slamowitz, L.L.P.; and
DOES 1-10, inclusive,

Defendants.

Civil Action No.: _____

CV 11 - 4657

COMPLAINT OF
FEUERSTEIN, J.
TOMLINSON, M.J.

For this Complaint, the Plaintiff, Racha Elfaham, by undersigned counsel, states as follows:

JURISDICTION

1. This action arises out of the Defendants' repeated violations of the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1692, et seq. ("FDCPA"), and the invasions of the Plaintiff's personal privacy by the Defendants and their agents in their illegal efforts to collect a consumer debt.

2. Supplemental jurisdiction exists pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1367.

3. Venue is proper in this District pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b), in that the Defendants transact business in this District and a substantial portion of the acts giving rise to this action occurred in this District.

PARTIES

4. The Plaintiff, Racha Elfaham ("Plaintiff"), is an adult individual residing in Kings Park, New York, and is a "consumer" as the term is defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(3).

5. Defendant Cohen & Slamowitz, L.L.P. ("Cohen"), is a New York business entity

with an address of 199 Crossways Park Drive, Woodbury, New York 11797, operating as a collection agency, and is a “debt collector” as the term is defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(6).

6. Does 1-10 (the “Collectors”) are individual collectors employed by Cohen and whose identities are currently unknown to the Plaintiff. One or more of the Collectors may be joined as parties once their identities are disclosed through discovery.

7. Cohen at all times acted by and through one or more of the Collectors.

ALLEGATIONS APPLICABLE TO ALL COUNTS

A. The Debt

8. A financial obligation in the approximate amount of \$1,300.00 (the “Debt”) was incurred to Capital One (the “Creditor”).

9. The Debt arose from services provided by the Creditor which were primarily for family, personal or household purposes and which meets the definition of a “debt” under 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(5).

10. The Debt was purchased, assigned or transferred to Cohen for collection, or Cohen was employed by the Creditor to collect the Debt.

11. The Defendants attempted to collect the Debt and, as such, engaged in “communications” as defined in 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(2).

B. Cohen Engages in Harassment and Abusive Tactics

12. In May, 2011, Defendants called Plaintiff concerning the Debt.

13. Defendants failed to inform Plaintiff that the communication was an attempt to collect a debt and everything Plaintiff said would be used for that purpose.

14. Via Certified Mail Plaintiff requested that Defendants provide proof that she

actually owed the amount Defendants sought.

15. Defendants failed to provide such proof.

16. An employee of the Defendants stated that the Creditor would be informed that Plaintiff was uncooperative and threatened to “take further action” against the Plaintiff.

17. Two months later, on August 4, 2011, Plaintiff received purported verification of the Debt.

18. Plaintiff called Defendants on August 5, 2011 and was informed that a lawsuit had been filed against her.

19. To date, no such lawsuit has been filed, as evidenced by the electronic records of New York Courts accessible at <http://iapps.courts.state.ny.us/webcivil/ecourtsMain>.

C. Plaintiff Suffered Actual Damages

20. The Plaintiff has suffered and continues to suffer actual damages as a result of the Defendants’ unlawful conduct.

21. As a direct consequence of the Defendants’ acts, practices and conduct, the Plaintiff suffered and continues to suffer from humiliation, anger, anxiety, emotional distress, fear, frustration and embarrassment.

COUNT I
VIOLATIONS OF THE FDCPA - 15 U.S.C. § 1692, et seq.

22. The Plaintiff incorporates by reference all of the above paragraphs of this Complaint as though fully stated herein.

23. The Defendants’ conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692d in that Defendants engaged in behavior the natural consequence of which was to harass, oppress, or abuse the Plaintiff in connection with the collection of a debt.

24. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692e(5) in that Defendants threatened to take legal action, without actually intending to do so.

25. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692e(10) in that Defendants employed false and deceptive means to collect a debt.

26. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692e(11) in that Defendants failed to inform the consumer that the communication was an attempt to collect a debt.

27. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)(1) in that Defendants failed to send the Plaintiff a validation notice stating the amount of the Debt.

28. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)(2) in that Defendants failed to send the Plaintiff a validation notice stating the name of the original creditor to whom the Debt was owed.

29. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)(3) in that Defendants failed to send the Plaintiff a validation notice stating the Plaintiff's right to dispute the Debt within thirty days.

30. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)(4) in that Defendants failed to send the Plaintiff a validation notice informing the Plaintiff of a right to have verification and judgment mailed to the Plaintiff.

31. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)(5) in that Defendants failed to send the Plaintiff a validation notice stating the Plaintiff's right to request the name and address of the original creditor.

32. The foregoing acts and omissions of the Defendants constitute numerous and multiple violations of the FDCPA, including every one of the above-cited provisions.

33. The Plaintiff is entitled to damages as a result of Defendants' violations.

COUNT II
VIOLATIONS OF NEW YORK GBL § 349
ENGAGING IN UNLAWFUL DECEPTIVE PRACTICES AND ACTS

34. The Plaintiff incorporates by reference all of the above paragraphs of this Complaint as though fully set forth herein at length.

35. The acts, practices and conduct engaged in by the Defendants and complained of herein constitute “deceptive acts and practices” within the meaning of Article 22A of the General Business Law of the State of New York, NY GBL § 349.

36. The Defendants willfully and knowingly engaged in conduct constituting deceptive acts and practices in violation of NY GBL § 349.

37. The Plaintiff has suffered and continues to suffer actual damages as a result of the foregoing acts and practices, including damages associated with, among other things, humiliation, anger, anxiety, emotional distress, fear, frustration and embarrassment caused by the Defendants.

38. By virtue of the foregoing, the Plaintiff is entitled to recover actual damages, trebled, together with reasonable attorneys’ fees.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, the Plaintiff respectfully prays that judgment be awarded in the Plaintiff’s favor and against the Defendants as follows:

1. Against the named the Defendants, jointly and severally, awarding the Plaintiff actual damages pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k(a)(1);
2. Against each of the named the Defendants, awarding the Plaintiff statutory damages of \$1,000.00 pursuant to 15 U.S.C. §1692k(a)(2)(A);
3. Against the named the Defendants, jointly and severally, awarding the Plaintiff

actual damages, trebled, pursuant to NY GBL § 349;

4. Against the named the Defendants, jointly and severally, awarding the Plaintiff recovery of the costs of litigation and reasonable attorney's fees pursuant to 15 U.S.C.

§ 1692k(a)(3);

5. Against the named the Defendants, jointly and severally, awarding the Plaintiff punitive damages in such amount as is found appropriate; and

6. Granting the Plaintiff such other and further relief as may be just and proper.

TRIAL BY JURY DEMANDED ON ALL COUNTS

Dated: September 20, 2011

Respectfully submitted,

By 

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